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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 11 January 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In another display of its blatant contempt for international law and the clear position of the international community, Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its unlawful, destructive settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. Recent illegal Israeli actions and measures are once again raising tensions on the ground, threatening to further destabilize the situation, particularly in the Holy City, and further harming the efforts to achieve the two-State solution for peace.

In this connection, we express our vehement condemnation, as has been expressed by the rest of the international community, of the demolition of the historic Shepherd Hotel in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in Occupied East Jerusalem. The Shepherd Hotel was razed by three Israeli bulldozers, early on Sunday, 9 January 2011, as part of a plan to build a new settlement of 20 units in the heart of East Jerusalem, further threatening the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, it must be reiterated that East Jerusalem remains occupied, that its annexation by the occupying Power continues to be rejected and unrecognized by the international community, and that the City is an integral part of the Palestinian territory and is deemed to be the future capital of the State of Palestine.

The continuation of this illegal colonization campaign once again confirms Israel's deliberate intent to defy international law and the unequivocal calls of the international community for the immediate, full cessation of all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Undisputedly, the consequences of such illegal and provocative actions seriously call into question Israel's genuineness and credibility as a peace partner and continue to undermine efforts to resume peace talks and to destroy the possibility of achieving a two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

While the Palestinian leadership takes positive note of the statements made by the international community denouncing the latest Israeli demolition of the Shepherd Hotel in order to build more illegal settlements, this latest development provides ample proof that such statements alone will not stop Israel's unlawful attempts to continue creating facts on the ground that prejudge and sabotage the two-State solution. In reality, the persistence of such Israeli actions constitute Israel's response to the global calls for a halt to this illegal practice as well as to the serious international and regional efforts being exerted for the realization of a peaceful solution and the achievement of peace and security in the Middle East.

At this critical juncture, the Palestinian leadership reiterates that a complete and permanent cessation of settlement activities is imperative — legally, under international law, and politically — to salvage the peace process. We thus call once again upon the international community, especially the United Nations Security Council, to uphold the relevant resolutions with effective actions that demonstrate responsibility and commitment to international peace and security. This requires immediate attention because, clearly, if Israel is permitted to continue acting with such impunity, its aggressive and illegal actions threaten to ignite yet another devastating cycle of violence that will take us farther away from the peace and stability we seek.

At the same time, Israel persists with its aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, continuing to deliberately violate their human rights and to cause loss of life and injury. In the occupied West Bank, Khaldoun Samoudi, 22 years old, was killed in cold blood by Israeli occupying forces positioned at Al-Hamra military checkpoint, east of Tubas in the West Bank. It should be recalled that on 2 January 2011, Ahmed Daraghma, 25 years old, was also killed at the same checkpoint while on his way to work. The death of Daraghma was conveyed in our letter to you dated 7 January 2011 (A/ES-10/528-S/2011/6).

Moreover, over the past 24 hours, Israeli occupying forces carried out yet another air strike against the Gaza Strip, deliberately targeting and committing the extrajudicial execution of Jamal al-Najjar, 25 years old, in broad daylight as he was riding his motorcycle in Khan Yunis. He was killed immediately and other civilians in the vicinity of the attack were injured and rushed to the hospital. In a separate incident, Israeli occupying forces also shot and killed Shaaban Al-Qarmoot, a 65-year-old farmer in the northern Gaza Strip. These latest incidents of Israeli aggression only cause further suffering in an already devastated society, living a humanitarian disaster because of the punitive, inhumane siege Israel, the occupying Power, has been imposing on the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza since 2007.

All of these actions clearly demonstrate the conscious choice the occupying Power is making in response to the overwhelming will of the international community, which is working tirelessly to save any credible chance for peace that may still exist from the jeopardy its illegal actions have caused. We call upon the international community to condemn Israel's ongoing settlement activities and all other illegal practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to unequivocally call upon the occupying Power to respect its legal obligations under international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as its obligations and commitments in the peace process, including under the Quartet road map. Israel must be compelled to desist immediately from all such

illegal, violent and provocative actions that are absolutely contradictory to the law and to the aim of achieving a just and lasting peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 381 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 7 January 2011 (A/ES-10/528-S/2011/6), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine